MARVEL COMICS
BOOK ONE
THE THANOS QUEST™
SCHEMES AND DREAMS
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RON LIM
JOHN BEATTY
TOM VINCENT

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MARVEL® COMICS • THE THANOS QUEST™ 1 • SCHEMES AND DREAMS

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BOOK ONE

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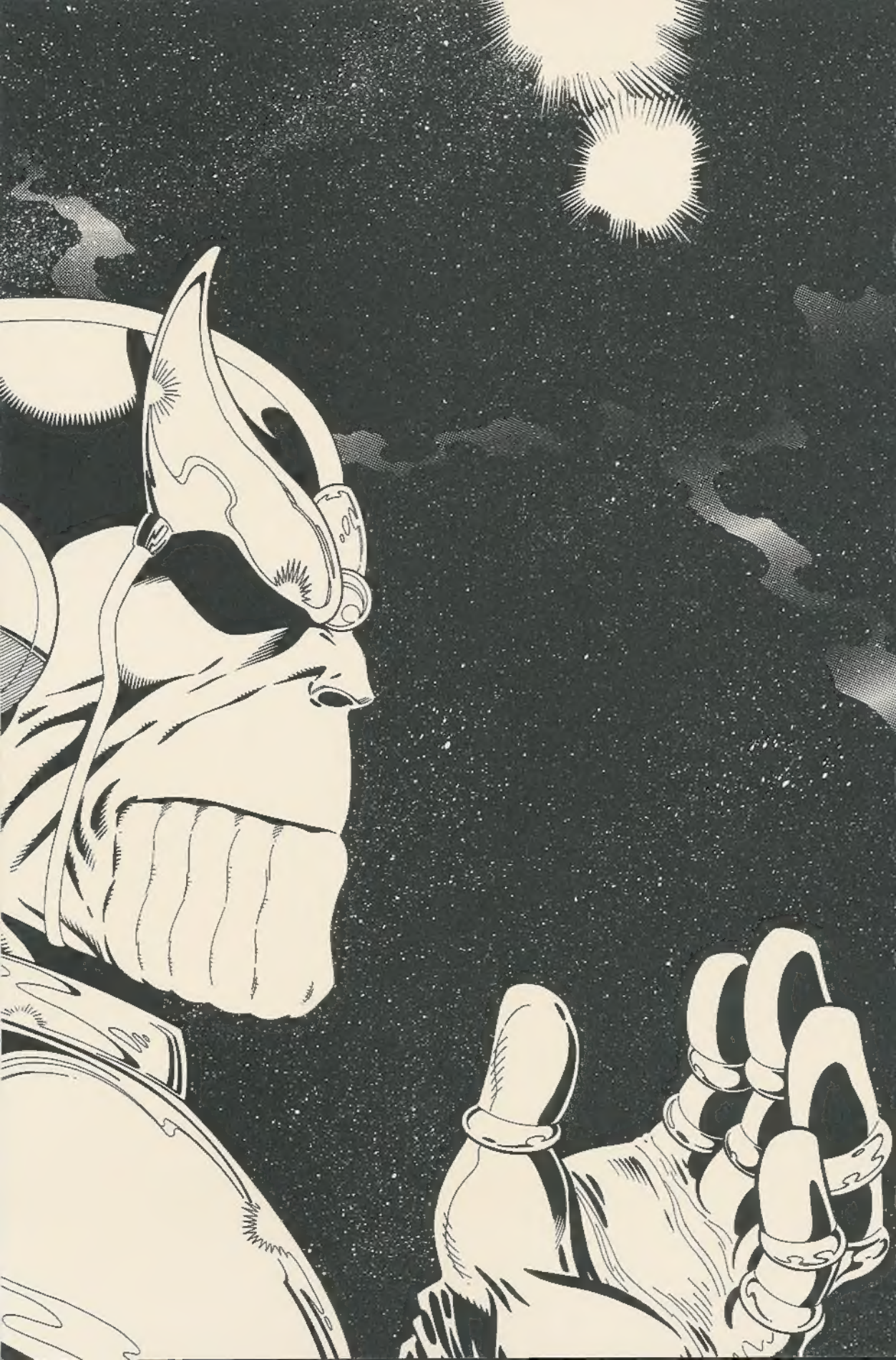
Six Soul Gems. Individually, they contain power beyond comprehension. Together, they could destroy a universe. And Thanos must have them all . . .

SCHEMES AND DREAMS

JIM STARLIN • RON LIM • JOHN BEATTY • TOM VINCENT



THE THANOS QUEST™
PART 1
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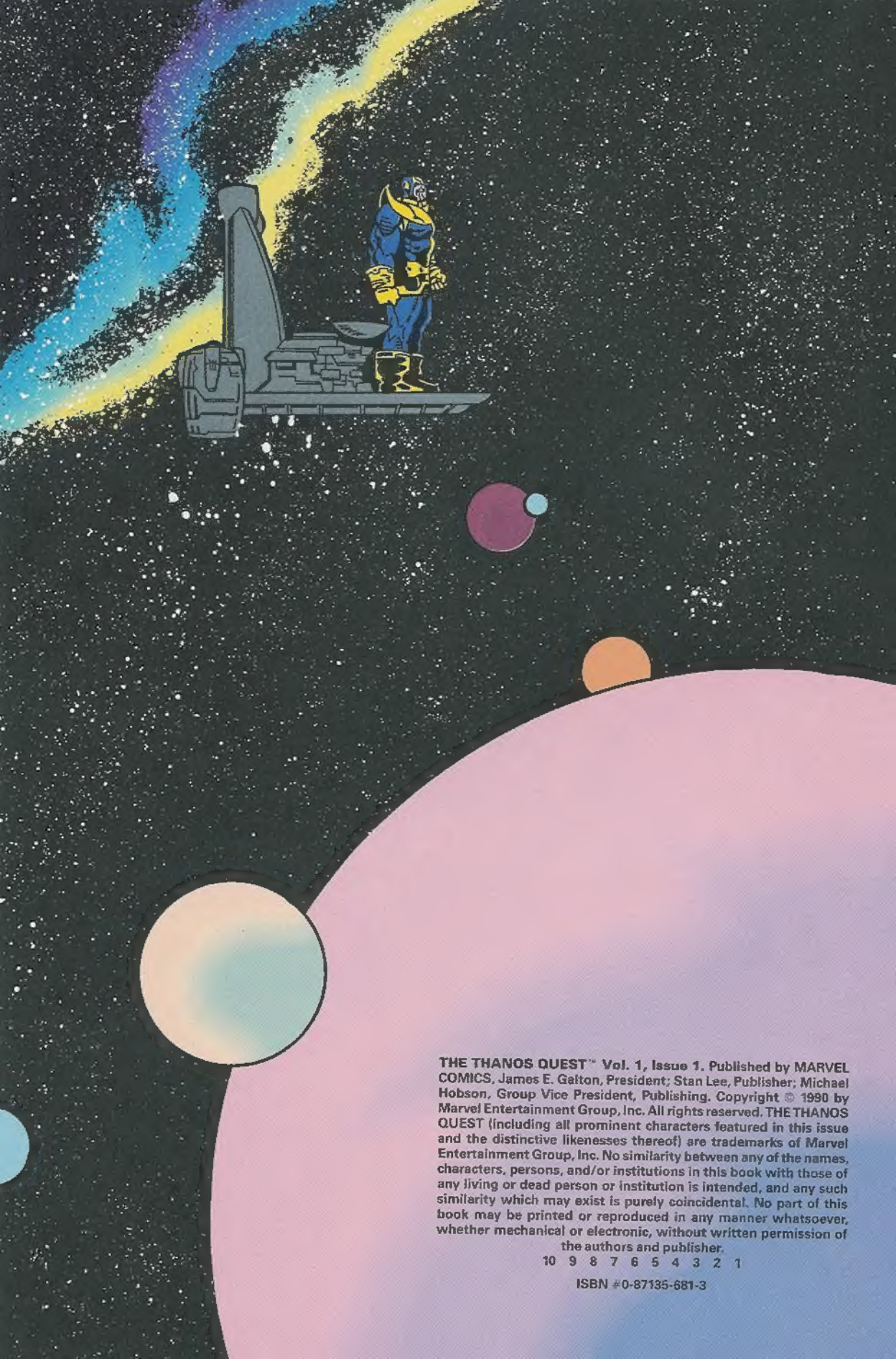

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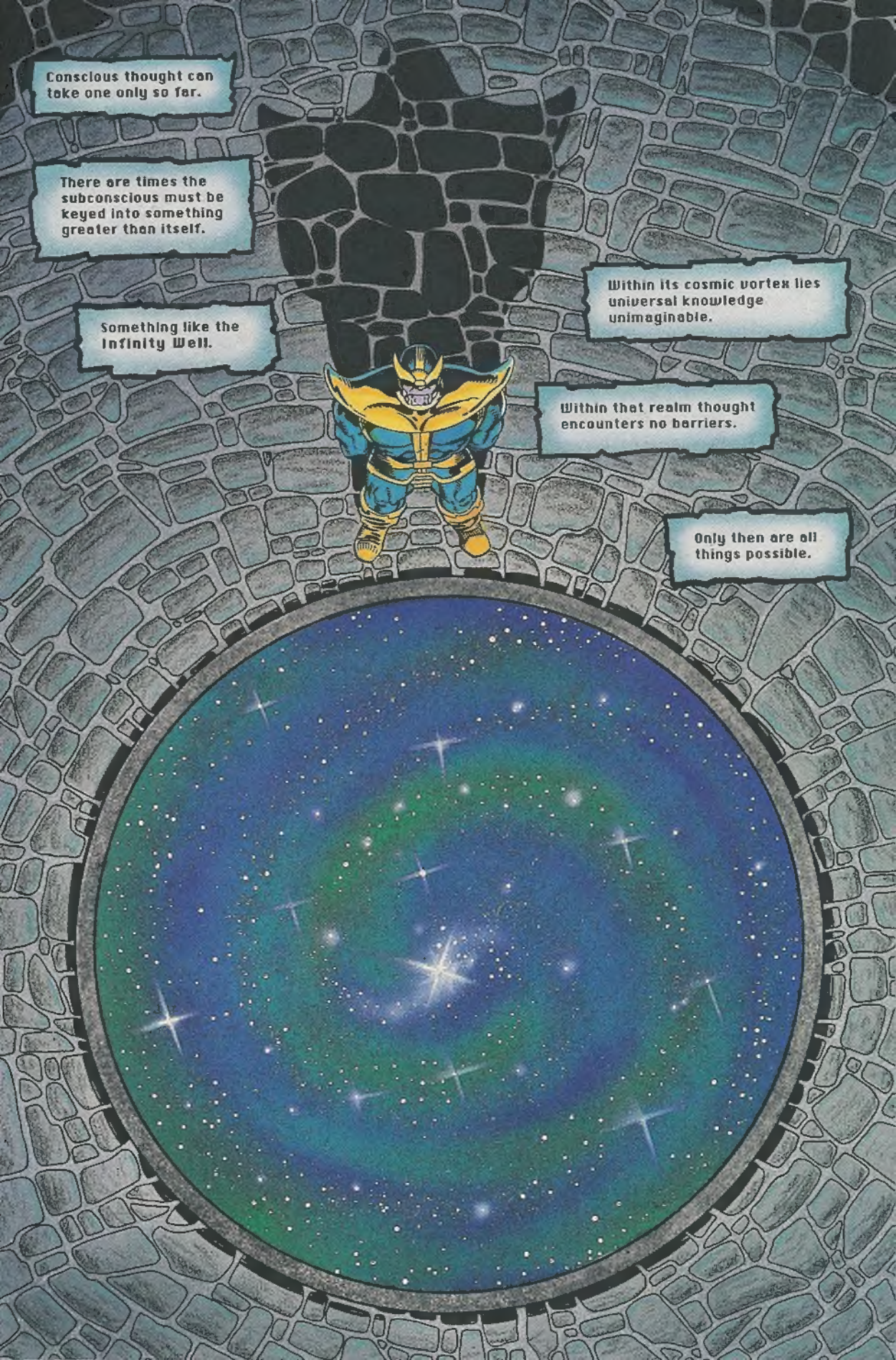

Conscious thought can take one only so far.
There are times the subconscious must be keyed into something greater than itself.
Something like the Infinity Well.
Within its cosmic vortex lies universal knowledge unimaginable.
Within that realm thought encounters no barriers.
Only then are all things possible.

THANOS, MISTRESS DEATH WISHES TO KNOW WHY YOU ARE NOT LABORING AT THE TASK ASSIGNED YOU.
HALF THE POPULATION OF YOUR UNIVERSE AWAITS DEATH'S GENTLE TOUCH.
WHY ARE YOU NOT OUT BRINGING THIS BOON TO THEM?
BECAUSE I GAZE INTO THE DEPTHS OF WISDOM.
SUCH KNOWLEDGE IS REQUIRED TO SERVE DEATH PROPERLY.
ONE ONLY REALIZES SUCH TRUTH WHEN HE HAS BEEN BEYOND THE VEIL AND RETURNED.
I WOULDN'T KNOW; I AM STILL DEAD.
NEED I REMIND MY MISTRESS THAT, EVEN IN MY FIRST INCARNATION, I SERVED HER LOYALLY?
NO OTHER HAS EVER, EVER BEEN SO FAITHFUL.
MISTRESS DEATH WISHES TO KNOW HOW THIS NEWLY ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE WILL FURTHER HER DESIRES.
OR IS THIS ALL MERELY SOME DEVILTRY PROUD THANOS COOKS UP FOR HIS OWN AMUSEMENT?

MY LOVE FOR DEATH DRIVES ME TO SHOULDER THE AWESOME TASK SHE HAS SET BEFORE ME.
I TACKLE IT WITH UNBRIDLED ENTHUSIASM.
BUT IT IS A MISSION ENDANGERED BY POSSIBLE OUTSIDE INTERFERENCES...
... AND ONE THAT WILL TAKE CENTURIES TO ACCOMPLISH WITH THE POWER I HAVE AT HAND.
BUT MY STUDIES HAVE REVEALED A WAY TO EXPEDITE THIS ASSIGNMENT.
TO DO SO I MUST AUGMENT MY PERSONAL POWERS AT LEAST TENFOLD.
BUT HAS NOT DEATH ALREADY GREATLY ENHANCED YOUR MIGHT?
ARE HER GIFTS NOT ENOUGH FOR YOU?
MOST DEFINITELY.
BUT WHAT I SEEK NOW IS A METHOD TO REFINE AND INCREASE THOSE TALENTS IN ORDER TO SERVE DEATH ALL THE BETTER.
CLARIFICATION, PLEASE.
I WISH TO SEARCH OUT SIX OBJECTS THROUGH WHICH TO FOCUS MY AWESOME MIGHT.
SIX OBJECTS?
THE SIX SOUL GEMS!

DID YOU NOT ONCE USE THESE JEWELS IN AN ATTEMPT TO DESTROY ALL THE STARS WITHIN YOUR GALAXY?
YES, A GOAL I FAILED TO REALIZE.
BUT AT THAT TIME I DID NOT PERCEIVE THE TRUE NATURE OF THESE GEMS.
I UTILIZED THEM AS A HAMMER, WHEN, IN REALITY, THEY ARE A SURGEON'S SCALPEL.
FORTUNATELY, MY TIME AT THE INFINITY WELL HAS OPENED MY EYES TO THEIR HIDDEN DESIGN.
WITH THEM IN HAND, NO TASK DEATH COULD ASSIGN ME WOULD BE TOO GREAT.
FORTUNATELY, THOSE WHO CURRENTLY POSSESS THE SOUL GEMS HAVE NO NOTION OF THE TRUE NATURE OF THEIR TREASURES.
THEY USE THEM AS CRUDE WEAPONS OR, EVEN WORSE, AS PERSONAL TALISMEN.
YOU ARE FOREVER THE PLOTTER AND SCHEMER, AREN'T YOU, DEAR THANOS?
ALL AND ALWAYS FOR YOUR BENEFIT, MISTRESS DEATH.
SO, DO I HAVE YOUR PERMISSION TO SEEK OUT A POSSIBLY SPEEDIER SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM SET ME?
MIGHT I ADD THAT THE FIRST GEM I WISH TO RETRIEVE IS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE CREATURE KNOWN AS THE IN-BETWEENER.

YOU WILL REMEMBER THE SCOUNDREL THAT RECENTLY FORCED US INTO ACTIONS AGAINST OUR WILL.
AN AFFRONTERY NOT EASILY FORGIVEN.
MISTRESS DEATH WOULD ENJOY SEEING THE IN-BETWEENER SUFFER ANY LOSS YOU MIGHT ENGINEER.
PERMISSION GRANTED!
My luck holds. My quest begins.
Six gems of unimaginable power. Once they are in Thanos's grasp...
...let the heavens tremble.

Mystic conjurings have revealed that the In-Betweener has recently become the prisoner of Lord Chaos and Master Order.
He apparently transgressed boundaries they set for him.
Journeying there is not something I would have dared in my past incarnation.
But that has all changed.
Now I am an agent of Death and her paramour. Now I fear nothing...
...save failure.
His prison could only be within the Nexus of Reality, the point where chaos and order meet and meld.

My trek takes me through strange myriad dimensions.
Inconceivable realities.
Different planes of existence exert different influences.
A spiritually and physically taxing experience.
For a lesser being this would be a fatal endeavor.
But Thanos endures as always.
Reality, like all outside influences...
. has a minimal effect on my being.
I always hold true to my self.
For I am Thanos...
a unique being in any reality.

My journey ends dramatically.
How else would one enter...
...the NEXUS of REALITY.
From here springs all that is.
It is the fulcrum of existence.
It is the meeting place of dichotomies.
It is the shared realm of chaos and order.

Of course the In-Betweener's prison rests between the polarities of actuality.
And there are guards.
They are creatures of mixed reality, the perfect sentries.
They sense me immediately.
Their intent is obvious.
But they were designed and created to bar the way of less formidable intruders than I.

GREETINGS, IN-BETWEENER.
YOU ARE THE DEMI-GOD THANOS, ARE YOU NOT?
I THOUGHT YOU DEAD.
NO LONGER.
WHAT BRINGS YOU TO SUCH INHOSPITABLE SURROUNDINGS?
YOU DO.
I'VE COME TO FREE YOU FROM YOUR UNJUST INCARCERATION.
YOUR INTENTION I APPLAUD, TITAN, BUT YOUR MOTIVES I QUESTION.
GREAT THANOS IS NOT KNOWN FOR HIS GENEROSITY.
BUT HIS PRAGMATISM IS LEGENDARY.

I AM OPEN TO LISTENING TO FURTHER EXPLANATION
I AM CURRENTLY A THRALL OF MISTRESS DEATH, A POSITION I CHAFE IN.
BUT ONE DOES NOT LEAVE HER SERVICE EASILY.
NOT WITHOUT FIRST FINDING A NEW PROTECTOR?
EXACTLY.
SOMEONE CAPABLE OF STAYING DEATH'S VENGEFUL HAND.
AND YOU FIGURED FREEING ME WOULD EARN YOU MY UNDYING GRATITUDE?
DEFINITELY.
WITH THE EMPHASIS ON THE UNDYING PART OF GRATITUDE.
DOES THIS FOOL ACTUALLY THINK I'VE NEED FOR A SLAVE LIKE HIMSELF?
RESCUE IS MY ONLY WANT.
PERHAPS I'D BEST PLAY ALONG WITH THIS DOLT.
I'LL NEVER GAIN FREEDOM ON MY OWN.
THIS THANOS'S MIGHT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO MY OWN.
ONCE HE SERVES ME, I SHALL DEAL WITH HIM ACCORDINGLY.

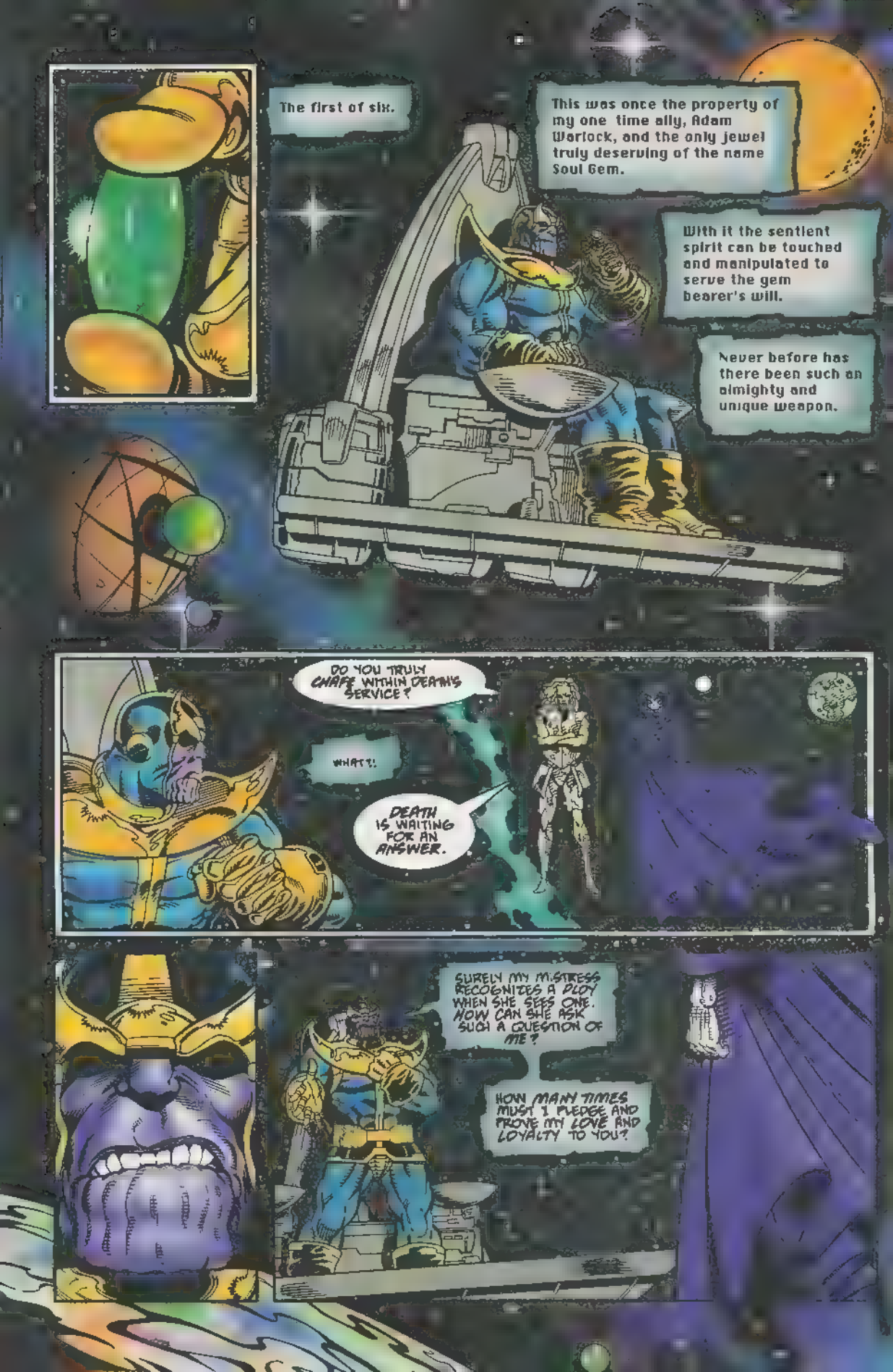
BUT TELL ME, THANOS, DO YOU HAVE THE POWER TO TEAR ASUNDER MY PRISON?
NO.
BUT TOGETHER, THE TWO OF US MIGHT BE ABLE TO FREE YOU
YOU EMPLOY YOUR MAGICS FROM WITHIN...
...WHILE I PIT MY MIGHT AGAINST THE SPHERE'S EXTERIOR.
IT SEEMS AS SOUND A PLAN AS ANY.
LET US BEGIN.
Even through the prison wall I can sense the awesome forces set loose within that globe.
I do my best to match them.

AT LONG LAST, I AM FORGED
IN TRUTH, I HAD GIVEN UP ALL HOPE.
WITHIN THANOS'S BREAST HOPE ALWAYS SPRINGS ETERNAL
YES, THANOS... MY SAVIOR...

HOW CAN I PROPERLY EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE FOR YOUR VALIANT EFFORTS?
HOW CAN I THANK ONE WHO HAS BETRAYED DEATH IN ORDER TO SAVE ME?
MOREOVER, HOW COULD I EVER TRUST SUCH A TRAITOR?
WHAT?
CONCEITED FOOL!
DID YOU REALLY THINK I WOULD ABANDON SWEET DEATH TO SERVE ONE SUCH AS YOU?
IN TRUTH, ALL I CAME FOR WAS THIS.

WOW?
THIS IS THE NEXUS OF REALITY, AN EXISTENCE WHERE CHAOS AND ORDER BOND.
WITHIN THIS PLANE, THERE ARE NO DICHOTOMIES YOUR UNIQUE POWERS NEED IN ORDER TO FUNCTION.
BUT THEY WORKED WITHIN THE SPHERE...
BECAUSE THE LORDS CHAOS AND ORDER ARE GENTLE WARDENS.
THEY ALLOWED YOU THAT LUXURY TO MAKE YOUR IMPRISONMENT MORE TOLERABLE.
BUT I DOUBT THEY'LL INDULGE YOU SO EVER AGAIN.
YOU SEE, THAT'S WHY THEY IMPRISONED YOU WITHIN THE PRISON OF THIS EXISTENCE.
EVEN THEY WEREN'T CERTAIN YOU COULDN'T ESCAPE THEIR MYSTIC CAGE
OF COURSE, THEY HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT I'D COME TO YOUR AID..AND THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SENSE MY PRESENCE.
YOU SEE, I AM ONE OF THOSE ODD BEINGS WHO IS OUTSIDE DESTINY'S USUAL REALM OF INFLUENCE.
CHAOS AND ORDER HAVE NO POWER OVER ME, AND SO CANNOT DETECT MY COMINGS AND GOINGS.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, THEY HAVE BEEN ALERTED TO YOUR ESCAPE AND ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE.
SO I MUST BE GOING.
MY GUESS IS THAT THEY'LL BE QUITE UPSET WITH YOU
YOUR NEXT PRISON WILL PROBABLY BE NOWHERE NEAR AS COMFORTABLE."

"MY APOLOGIES."
LORD CHAOS!
MASTER ORDER!
THIS IS NOT MY FAULT...
THIS IS ALL THANOS OF TITAN'S WORK!
NOT ME!
YOU MUST LISTEN!
AAAIIIEEEEE


The first of six.
This was once the property of my one time ally, Adam Warlock, and the only jewel truly deserving of the name Soul Gem.
With it the sentient spirit can be touched and manipulated to serve the gem bearer's will.
Never before has there been such an almighty and unique weapon.
DO YOU TRULY CHAFE WITHIN DEATH'S SERVICE?
WHAT?!
DEATH IS WAITING FOR AN ANSWER.
SURELY MY MISTRESS RECOGNIZES A PLOY WHEN SHE SEES ONE. HOW CAN SHE ASK SUCH A QUESTION OF ME?
HOW MANY TIMES MUST I PLEDGE AND PROVE MY LOVE AND LOYALTY TO YOU?

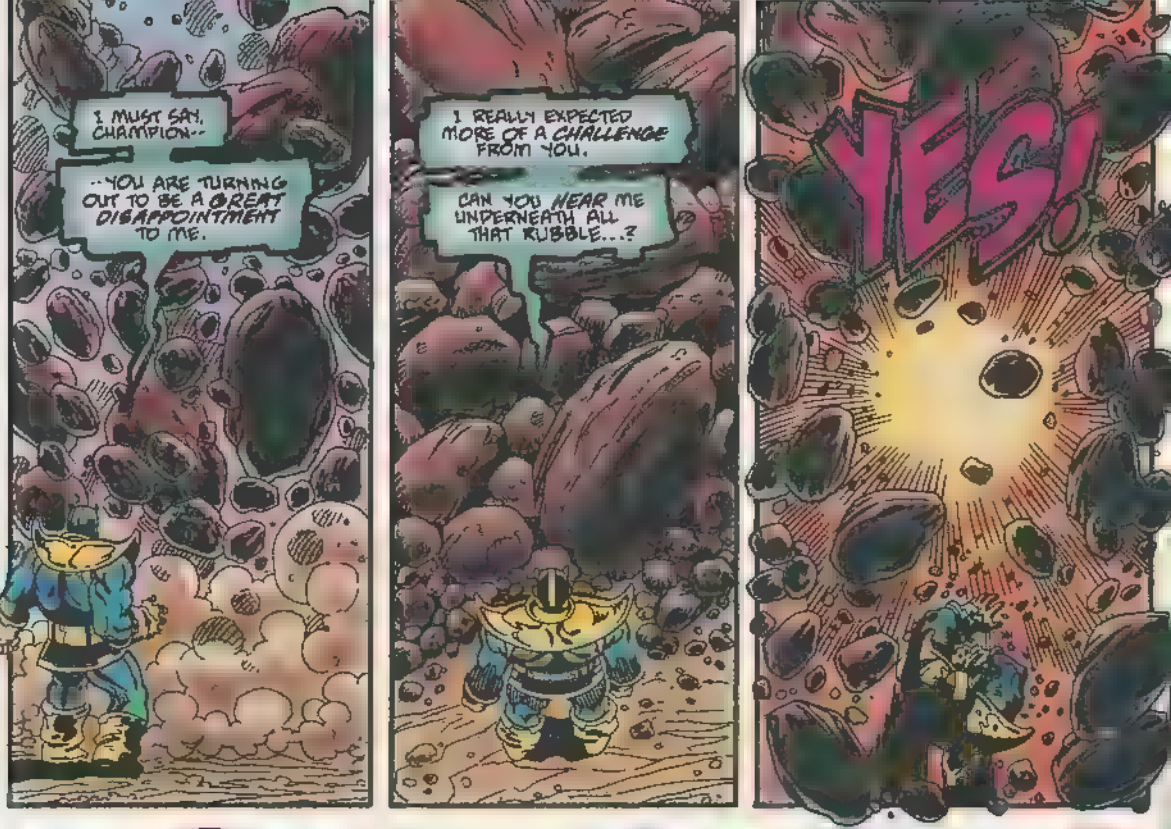
I SWEAR TO YOU, MY LADY, MY DEVOTION AND SOUL ARE YOURS TO COMMAND.
AND DESPITE ALL THE EVIL I HAVE DONE IN MY PAST...
...YOU KNOW THAT WHEN MY WORD IS GIVEN IT IS ALWAYS HONORED.
MISTRESS DEATH ACCEPTS THIS TESTAMENT AND WISHES YOU GOOD FORTUNE ON YOUR QUEST
SO SHE IS KEEPING AN EYE ON ME.
...JUST AS I EXPECTED.
WHICH MEANS I MUST BE DOUBLY CAREFUL.
IF SHE SHOULD STUMBLE ONTO MY TRUE PLAN BEFORE I AM READY TO REVEAL IT...

It is best not to even consider the dire ramifications of such a premature disclosure.
The planet Tamarata.
A strategic world in the defense plans of five different warring federations.
It is a planet constantly under siege, forever being conquered and reconquered.
It is the perfect home for the Elder who calls himself CHAMPION.
Where else can this immortal regularly test his highly vaunted fighting skills; daily facing one federation after the other, always letting them think he works for the enemy.
To a creature who lives for combat, this world is paradise.
On this world, Champion has never tasted defeat.

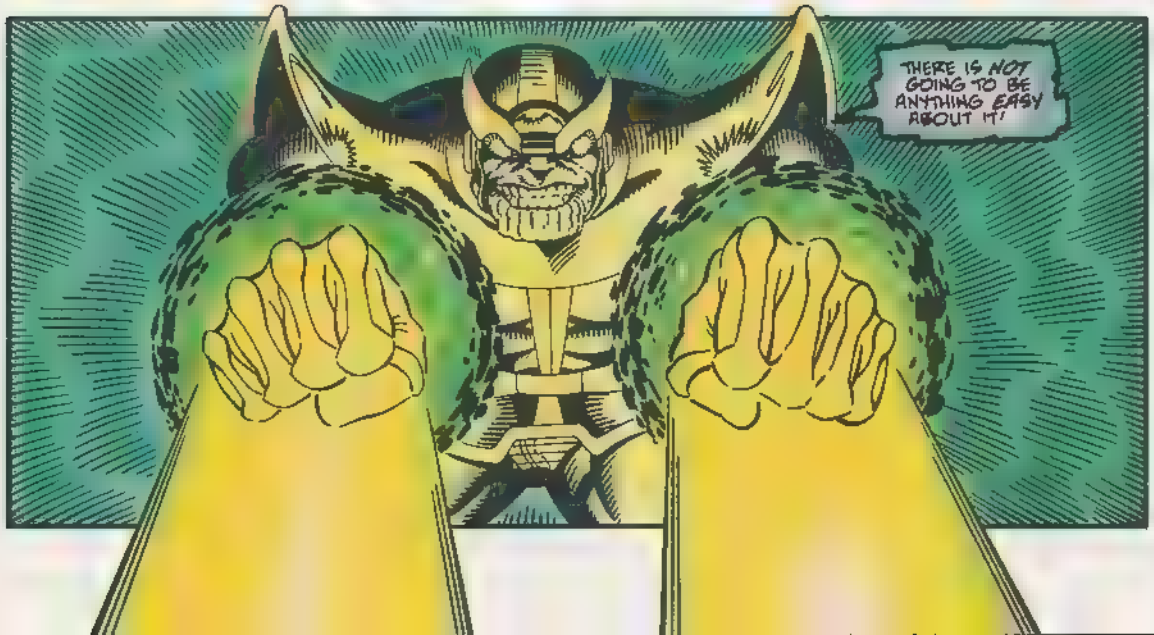
Nor will he ever against such foes as long as he wears that gem on his forehead.
For it is a conduit to a seemingly limitless source of unfocused energy.
The gem's wearer can tap into this reservoir to augment any force it wishes to utilize.
Champion has managed to do this on a subconscious level.
He has no idea of the gem's worth, believes its power dormant and only wears it as a good luck charm.
Champion credits his successes on his own battle prowess.
It shall prove his undoing
I reprogram my teleportation system for remote external function.
The power of the gem shall be mine.
CHAMPION!
WHEN YOU FINISH PLAYING AROUND WITH THOSE CHILDREN, I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH YOU.

WHO MIGHT YOU BE AND WHAT DO YOU WANT?
I AM CALLED THANOS, AND I'VE COME TO TAKE THIS PLANET AWAY FROM YOU.
WHAT NEEDS HAVE YOU OF THIS WORLD?
NONE. BATTLE WITH A WORTHY OPPONENT IS WHAT I REALLY CRAVE.
WILL I FIND IT HERE?
YES, BUT YOU WILL ALSO FIND DEFEAT ON THIS PLANET.
FOR I AM CHAMPION!
I AM INVINCIBLE!
YOU ALSO TELEGRAPH YOUR BLOWS A LIGHT YEAR AHEAD OF THEIR COMING
WHAM

NEVER MIND.
YOU DARE MOCK CHAMPION?
FOR THAT, YOU SHALL PAY!
I DOUBT IT.


I MUST SAY, CHAMPION--
..YOU ARE TURNING OUT TO BE A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO ME.
I REALLY EXPECTED MORE OF A CHALLENGE FROM YOU.
CAN YOU HEAR ME UNDERNEATH ALL THAT RUBBLE...?
YES!

YOU ARE DEFINITELY A TRICKY ONE, THANOS.
FROM THIS POINT ON, CHAMPION WILL TAKE IT SLOW AND EASY WITH YOU.
YOU OBVIOUSLY MISUNDERSTAND THE POINT OF THIS ENCOUNTER, CHAMPION.


THERE IS NOT GOING TO BE ANYTHING EASY ABOUT IT!

NOW DO YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN?
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN FANCY ENERGY BEAMS TO BEAT CHAMPION!
PERHAPS
THEN AGAIN, PERHAPS NOT.
THERE ARE NO PERHAPS ABOUT IT.
ONCE CHAMPION SETS HIS MIND TO SOMETHING, HE IS UNSTOPPABLE!

NO FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE CAN CURB MY RIGHTEOUS ANGER!
NO ENEMY CAN STAND AGAINST MY MIGHT!
NO POWER IS CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING A BLOW FROM MY IRON FISTS!
I AM CHAMPION AND I...
...TALK TOO MUCH!

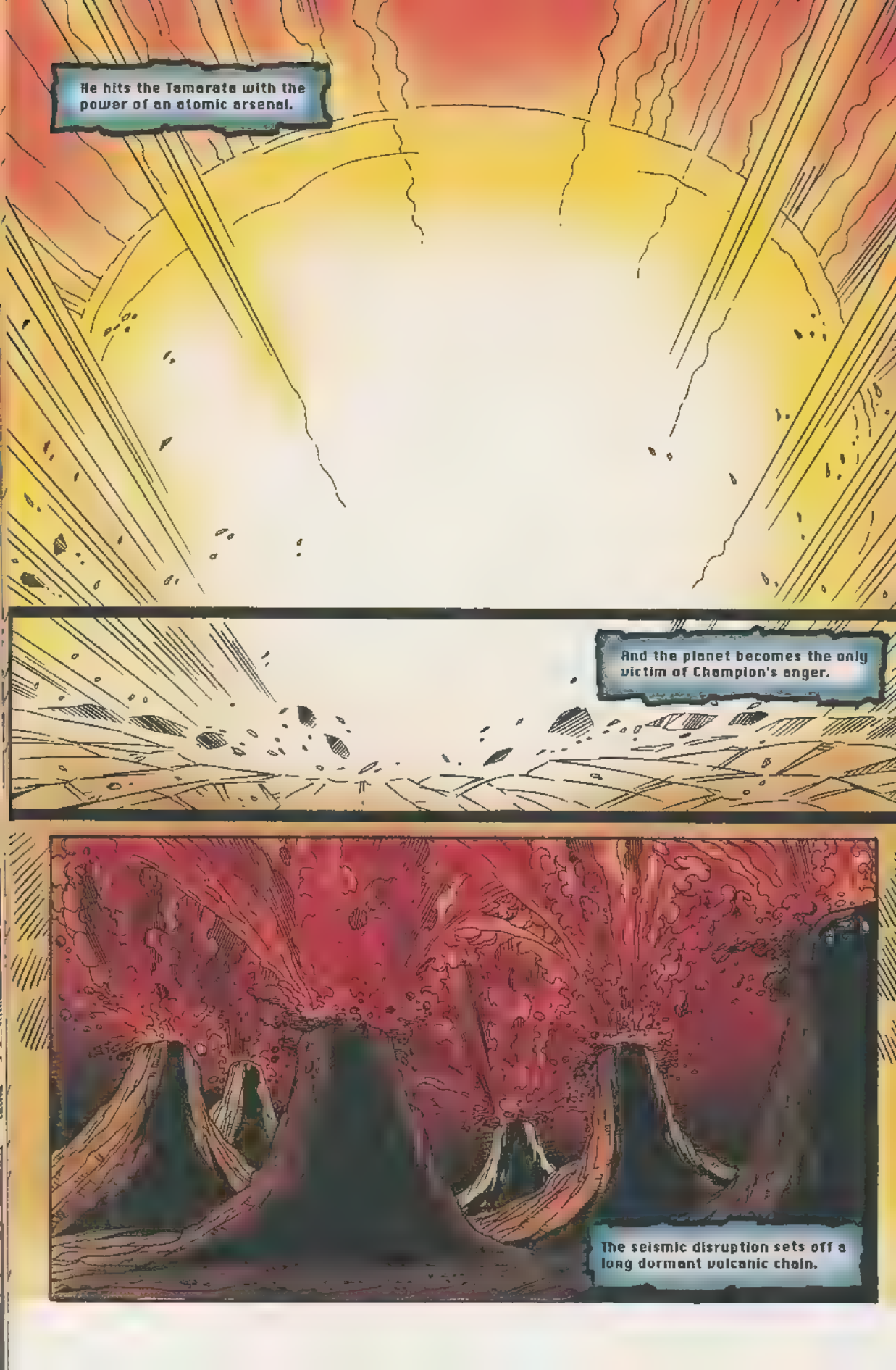
AND THINK TOO LITTLE.
SUCH TRICKS AND TAUNTS WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT IN A CONTEST WITH CHAMPION!
IT IS POWER AND SKILL THAT COUNTS!
AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN, TO YOUR SORROW!
SHIELDS UP.
KA-RUUMPH!

SO YOUR ARSENAL OF TOYS INCLUDES AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD, DOES IT?
WELL, CHAMPION HAS ENCOUNTERED SUCH CHEAP TRICKS IN THE PAST!
AND HE HAS ALWAYS OVERCOME THEM.
I can well believe that.
The force he concentrates on my shields is nearly inconceivable.
I already begin to feel them buckle.
His strength seems to grow in direct proportion to his anger.
In many ways I assume this is what it would be like battling the Terran behemoth, the Hulk.
A conflict I've sought to avoid over the years.
The force field is crumbling.
The enraged monster will be on me in a moment.

But then the Elder does the unexpected.
He backs off when victory is only a few blows away.
DAMNATION.
YOU ARE NO WARRIOR, TITAN!
A TRUE WARRIOR DOES NOT HIDE BEHIND SCIENTIFIC HARDWARE!
BUT IT WON'T WIN THE DAY FOR YOU!
I AM CHAMPION, THE MOST POWERFUL FIGHTER IN THE UNIVERSE!
NOTHING CAN STOP ME! NOTHING!
And then, as if programmed, Champion makes the move I have been waiting for.
These muscle bound types are all so predictable.

They pump themselves into a righteous steroid frenzy, thinking power is the answer to all problems.
They actually believe their granite fists can gain for them what their puny intellects cannot.
It is much like dealing with a child.
A half ton child, but a child nonetheless.

But it will benefit him little.
In the end, the mind always proves to be the most powerful muscle.
And this infantile berserker is backed by almost unlimited might.
TELEPORTER AWAY.
HUH-?


He hits the Tamarata with the power of an atomic arsenal.
And the planet becomes the only victim of Champion's anger.
The seismic disruption sets off a long dormant volcanic chain.

The reaction continues along the length of the continental shelf.
This in turn sets off new eruptions which trigger ever more devastating events.
Of course Champion had no idea that he possessed such power.
But I did.
And I knew his unchecked anger could be manipulated to use his own strength against him.

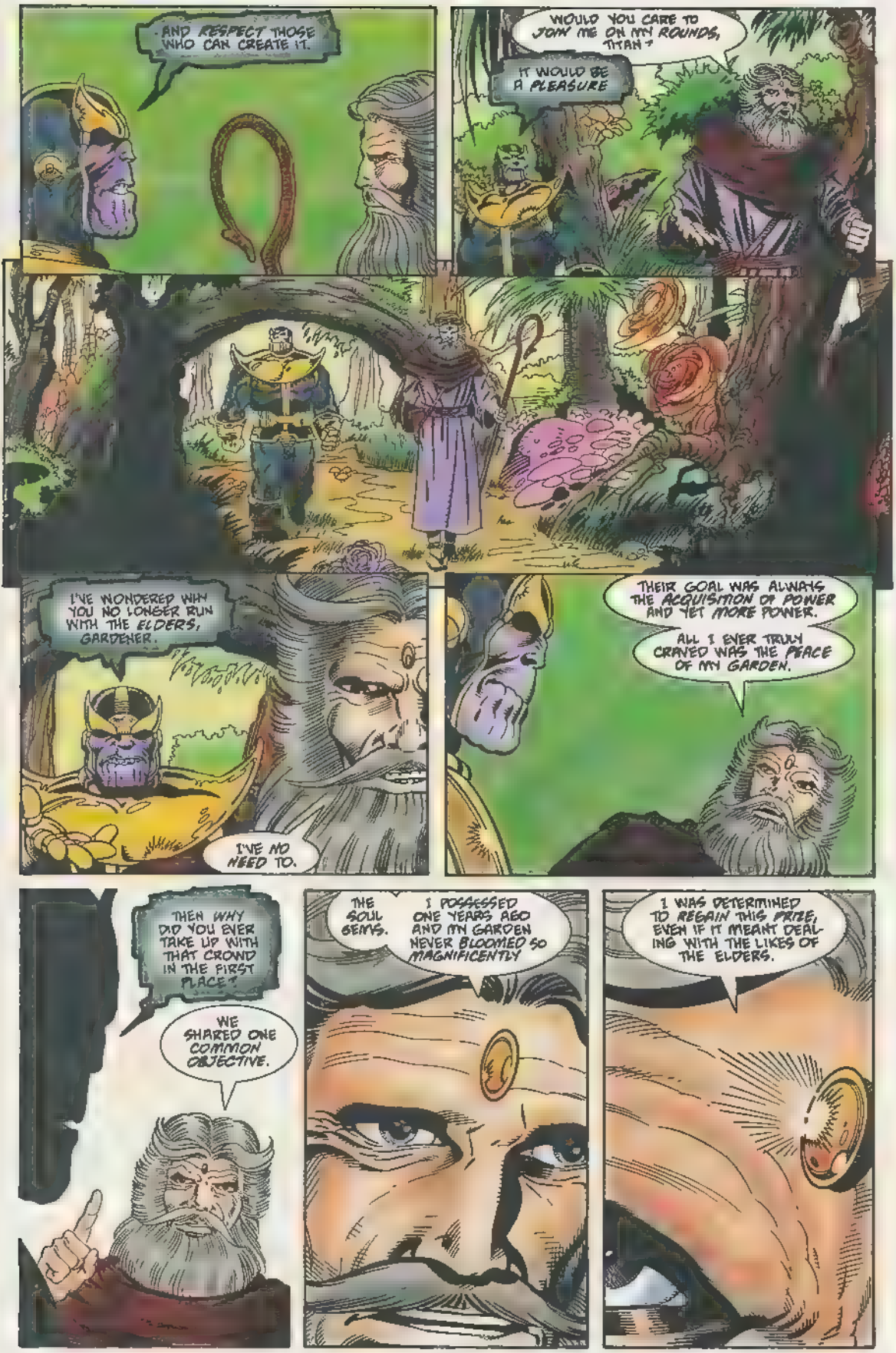
I WON!
NO ONE CAN STAND AGAINST CHAMPION'S MIGHT!
I'VE WON IT ALL!
HAVE YOU NOW?
IT LOOKS TO ME THAT ALL YOU'VE MANAGED TO DO IS DESTROY TAMARATA, THE PRIZE WE FOUGHT FOR, AND STRAND YOURSELF IN OUTER SPACE.

I'LL BATTLE YOU FOR YOUR VESSEL!
WHY SHOULD I AGREE TO SUCH A CONTEST?
FOR THE HONOR OF COMBAT!
RUBBISH. I DON'T FEEL LIKE FIGHTING.
THEN I SHALL SMASH YOUR CRAFT.
NOT WHILE I HAVE A FORCE FIELD TO PROTECT IT
YOU BEGIN TO BORE ME, CHAMPION. FAREWELL.
WAIT!
YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS!
WHY NOT? YOU ARE IMMORTAL. FLOATING IN SPACE WILL NOT KILL YOU.
BUT I IMAGINE THE EXPERIENCE WILL GET RATHER OLD AFTER A CENTURY OR TWO.
PLEASE! I BEG YOU! TRANSPORT ME TO ANOTHER PLANET!
I WILL, FOR A PRICE.
WHAT PRICE?
YOUR SOUL GEM.
MY GEM?

FORGET IT.
SOONER OR LATER SOMEONE WILL COME ALONG AND FIND ME.
AND THEY'LL PROBABLY REMEMBER WHAT AN EGOTISTICAL MONSTER YOU WERE AND LEAVE YOU.
HERE! TAKE IT!
THING NEVER FUNCTIONED ANYWAY
THANK YOU.
YOU WILL STILL TAKE ME TO ANOTHER WORLD EVEN THOUGH IT DOESN'T WORK?
THANOS ALWAYS HONORS AN AGREEMENT.
MY TRACTOR BEAM WILL TOW YOU TO THE NEAREST PLANET.
I EXPECT THIS WORLD WILL BE SUITABLE?
YES, I KNOW THIS PLACE. IT IS RULED BY WEAKLINGS.
I SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE...
HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

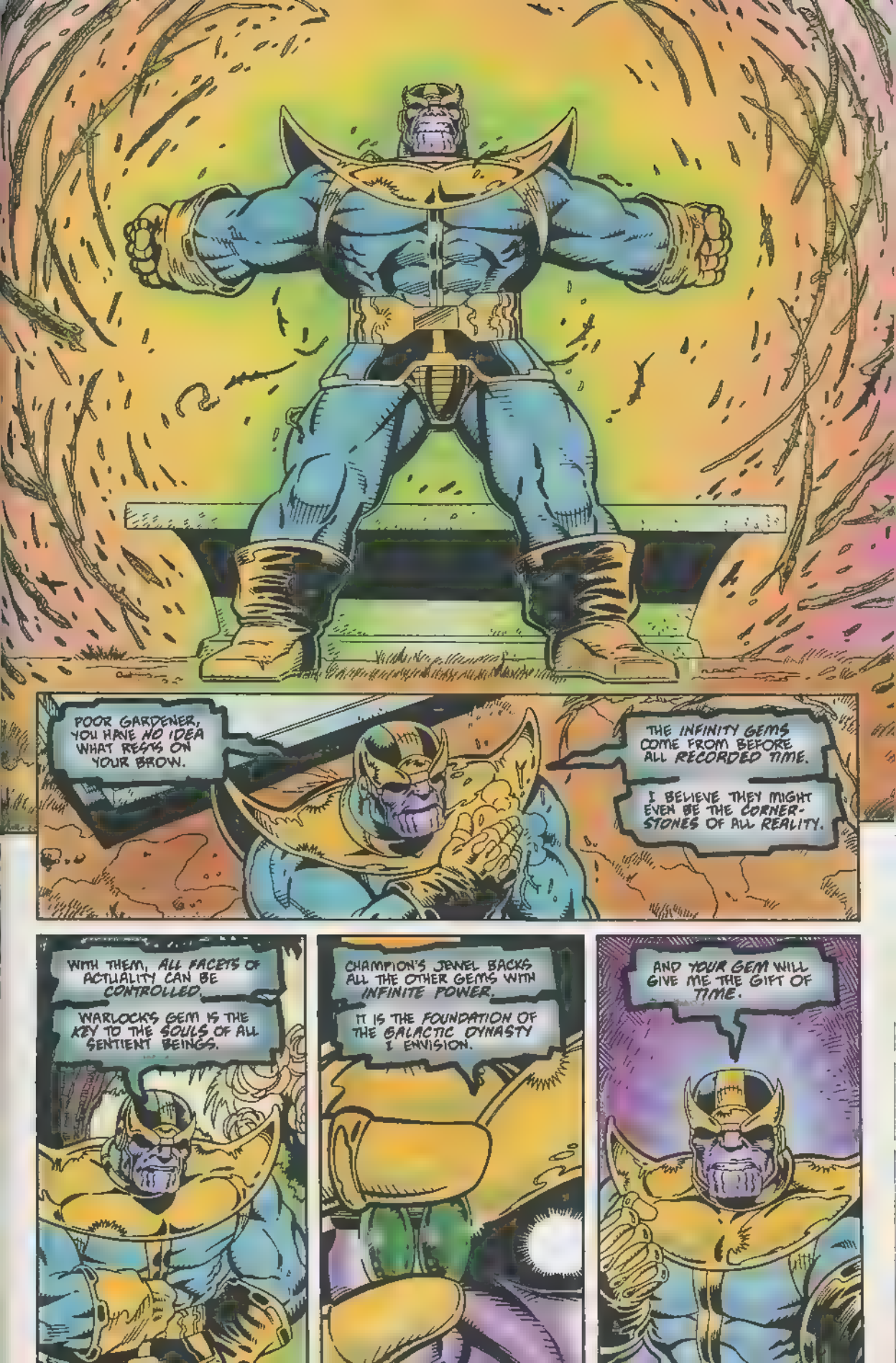
HONORING OUR AGREEMENT AND RELEASING YOU FROM THE TRACTOR BEAM.
I SAID I WOULD TRANSPORT YOU TO ANOTHER PLANET, AND I HAVE.
OUR AGREEMENT NEVER STIPULATED TO ANYTHING ABOUT...
...A SOFT LANDING.
I WONDER IF CHAMPION WILL SURVIVE THE FALL
HE IS IMMORTAL.
BUT THERE ARE LIMITS TO EVEN IMMORTALITY.
PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE TREATED HIM BETTER.
AFTER ALL, HE DID PROVIDE ME WITH A GREAT DEAL OF AMUSEMENT AND THE SECOND SOUL GEM.
BUT THEN AGAIN, SEEING AS HOW ONLY THE FIRST JEWEL HAS CONTROL OVER THE SOUL, A BETTER NAME FOR THEM MIGHT BE THE INFINITY GEMS
AND NOW TWO OF THEM ARE MINE.
THE SOUL GEM AND THE GEM OF POWER.
THE LATTER JEWEL WILL COME IN VERY HANDY DURING MY NEXT ENCOUNTER.
FOR THE THIRD GEM I SEEK IS CURRENTLY IN THE POSSESSION OF...

The GARDENER.
Once his only concern was creating floral beauty. This desire led him to track down an Infinity Gem to use as a tool for this end.
But it also put him in contact with the Elders and awakened a hunger for power within him.
Perhaps this drive has been quieted. Because of late he has broken off his association with the Elders and returned to merely tending his garden.
AND A TRULY MARVELOUS GARDEN IT IS
STRANGE WORDS COMING FROM THANOS OF TITAN.
LET ME ASSURE YOU, GARDENER, THAT DESPITE MY LOVE FOR DEATH, I CAN STILL APPRECIATE BEAUTY.


AND RESPECT THOSE WHO CAN CREATE IT.
WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME ON MY ROUNDS, TITAN?
IT WOULD BE A PLEASURE
I'VE WONDERED WHY YOU NO LONGER RUN WITH THE ELDERS, GARDENER.
I'VE NO NEED TO.
THEIR GOAL WAS ALWAYS THE ACQUISITION OF POWER AND YET MORE POWER.
ALL I EVER TRULY CRAVED WAS THE PEACE OF MY GARDEN.
THEN WHY DID YOU EVER TAKE UP WITH THAT CROWD IN THE FIRST PLACE?
WE SHARED ONE COMMON OBJECTIVE.
THE SOUL GEMS.
I POSSESSED ONE YEARS AGO AND MY GARDEN NEVER BLOOMED SO MAGNIFICENTLY
I WAS DETERMINED TO REGAIN THIS PRIZE, EVEN IF IT MEANT DEALING WITH THE LIKES OF THE ELDERS.

AND NOW THAT I HAVE, MY GARDEN MUST SURELY BE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.
A SENTIMENT I CANNOT ARGUE WITH.
SHALL WE SIT AND ENJOY THE GREEN FOR AWHILE?
AN EXCELLENT IDEA.
OF COURSE. YOU KNOW WHY I AM HERE.
FOR MY SOUL GEM.
I NEED IT TO FURTHER MY OWN DREAMS.
AND THESE DREAMS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY GARDEN?

YES, MY GOAL MUST OVERRIDE ALL OTHERS.
MY LOVE FOR DEATH CANNOT BE DENIED.
YOU REALIZE I CANNOT GIVE UP THE GEM WITHOUT A FIGHT.
I WISH YOU'D RECONSIDER THAT DECISION.
SURELY YOU MUST SENSE THAT YOUR POWER IS NOTHING WHEN COMPARED TO MINE.
YES, AND I KNOW YOU ALREADY POSSESS TWO OTHER SOUL GEMS, WHICH MAKES YOU A TRULY UNBEATABLE FOE.
BUT I, TOO, MUST BE TRUE TO MY OWN DESIRES AND NEEDS.
I HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU, GARDENER.
NOR I YOU, BUT OUR DREAMS ARE AT ODDS.
SUCH A PITY...


POOR GARDENER, YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT RESTS ON YOUR BROW.
THE INFINITY GEMS COME FROM BEFORE ALL RECORDED TIME.
I BELIEVE THEY MIGHT EVEN BE THE CORNER-STONES OF ALL REALITY.
WITH THEM, ALL FACETS OF ACTUALITY CAN BE CONTROLLED.
WARLOCK'S GEM IS THE KEY TO THE SOULS OF ALL SENTIENT BEINGS.
CHAMPION'S JEWEL BACKS ALL THE OTHER GEMS WITH INFINITE POWER.
IT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE GALACTIC DYNASTY I ENVISION.
AND YOUR GEM WILL GIVE ME THE GIFT OF TIME.

YOU DIDN'T CONSCIOUSLY REALIZE THAT WAS YOUR JEWEL'S SECRET PROPERTY.
WITH IT, THE STREAMS OF TIME CAN BE RECONSTRUCTED AS EASILY AS A CHILD BUILDS A SANDCASTLE.
ONLY YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS BARELY PERCEIVED THE GEM'S POTENTIAL.
THAT WAS HOW YOU CREATED YOUR WONDROUS GARDEN.
YOUR PLANTS GREW SO RAPIDLY BECAUSE YOU RACED THEM THROUGH THEIR GROWTH CYCLES.
AND THEY BLOOMED ETERNALLY BECAUSE YOU FROZE THE MOMENT THEY REACHED THE ZENITH OF THEIR BEAUTY.
BOTANICAL SPLENDOR NEVER BEFORE ACHIEVED.
UNFORTUNATELY, WITHOUT THE GEM'S AID, THE GARDEN'S BEAUTY WON'T LAST.
FOR THAT I AM TRULY SORRY, AND I HOPE...
...THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND MY REGRET, EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN NO LONGER HEAR MY WORDS.

I USED THE GEM OF POWER TO AUGMENT YOUR JEWEL'S PLANT GROWING ABILITIES TO LEVELS YOU NEVER DREAMT OF.
TO LEVELS BEYOND YOUR CONTROL.
I ADMITTEDLY FEEL A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SHAME IN TURNING YOUR GREATEST GIFT INTO THE INSTRUMENT OF YOUR DESTRUCTION.

YOUR FATE WILL LAY HEAVILY ON MY HEART, THOUGH BY ALL RIGHTS IT SHOULDN'T.
I DID NOT FORCE YOU TO FIGHT ME. I GAVE YOU THE CHANCE TO SURRENDER THE GEM.
YOU FORCED ME INTO DOING WHAT I DID. I HAD TO BE FAITHFUL TO MY NATURE.
FOR, AFTER ALL, I AM THANOS.

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Six Soul Gems. Individually, they contain power beyond comprehension. Together, they could destroy a universe. And Thanos must have them all . . .

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